

Children's Reaction to Soldier's Return

Reactions	Techniques
Birth to 1 Year	
Cries Fusses Pulls away from you Clings to spouse or caregiver Has problems with elimination Changes their sleeping and eating habits Does not recognize you	Hold the baby, and hug him/her a lot. Bathe and change your baby; feed and play with him/her. Relax and be patient; he/she will warm up to you after a while.
1 to 3 Years	
Shyness Clinging Does not recognize you Cries Has temper tantrums Regresses—no longer toilet trained	Don't force holding, hugging, kissing. Give them space. Give them time to warm up. Be gentle and fun. Sit at their level.
3 to 5 Years	
Demonstrates anger Acts out to get your attention; needs proof that you're real Is demanding Feels guilty for making the parent go away Talks a lot to bring you up to date	Listen to them. Accept their feelings. Play with them. Reinforce that you love them. Find out the new things on TV, at preschool, books.
5 to 12 Years	
Isn't good enough Dreads your return because of discipline Boasts about Army and parent	Review pictures, schoolwork, activities, scrap books. Praise what they have done. Try not to criticize.
13 to 18 Years	
Is excited Feels guilty because they don't live up to standards Is concerned about rules and responsibilities Feels too old or is unwilling to change plans to accommodate parent Is rebellious	Share what has happened with you. Listen with undivided attention. Don't be judgmental. Respect privacy and friends. Don't tease about fashion, music.